

Stacey L. Brown

Mothering

Perspectives from African American, West Indian and Latina Adolescents

This research deconstructs the ways in which adolescent parenthood has traditionally been studied and shifts the focus onto parenting itself. The investigation employs the multiracial feminist framework for understanding the dynamics of teenage pregnancy for African American, West Indian and Latin mothers. Departing from investigations that define teenage pregnancy as pathological and immoral, this research approaches it as a symptom or byproduct of particular social conditions and as a socially relevant family form. The objective was to examine how race, ethnicity and cultural identity influence mothering. Through twenty-three in-depth interviews, the major findings revealed that the experience of motherhood was perceived as more alike than different from other mothers regardless of variations in age, race, ethnicity or class. These young mothers feel that while their cultural customs and access to resources may vary across cultural and class lines, their mothering practices remain comparable. The assumption is that mothers want to be their best and have the best for their children regardless of cultural identity. Further, they face similar challenges in getting the fathers of their children to fully participate in the rearing of their children.

This investigation articulates the experiences of families typically devalued by the ideology of the family as a bounded unit centered on an "adult" married couple. The data can inform the public discourse on adolescent childbearing and parenting and assist in identifying community assets that can offer viable solutions specific enough to the populations studied (i.e. culturally appropriate) and general enough for all parenting mothers.

Introduction and background

Western industrialized countries experienced a declining trend in births to teens during the period of 1970 to 2000 (AGI, 2002). However, among developed nations, the United States continues to have substantially higher

rates of both pregnancies and births to adolescents. To illustrate, consider the fact that the adolescent pregnancy rate in the United States is nearly twice that of Canada and Great Britain and approximately five times that in Germany and France (Kaufmann, et al., 1998). Research shows that the different rates in teen pregnancies are not attributed to teens engaging in less sexual intercourse among these countries; instead, the distinction lies in regular contraceptive use (Trussell, 1988). American adolescents are less likely to receive recurring, comprehensive sex education information, to have adequate access to contraception and other forms of reproductive health care, and to receive free contraceptive products (Trussell 1988; Berne and Huberman 1999).

While the birth rates to adolescents vary greatly from state to state, Connecticut, the state in which this research took place, has pregnancy and birth rates comparable to U.S. national trends. According to 2000 data, Connecticut ranked 33 in the nation for rates of pregnancy, birth and abortion per 1000 women aged 15-19 (AGI, 2004). In 1997, Hartford, Connecticut had the highest teen birth rate of any city in the nation, 114 births per 1,000 teens (Gruendel, 2001) (see Tables 1 and 2 for details). Further, Hartford ranked among the highest in the state for repeat teen births (Connecticut State Department of Public Health, 2001). Hartford's teen birth rate has improved, but it remains high. In 1999, across the three Hartford high schools, there were more teen girls who gave birth than graduated (Hartford Department of Public Health, 2001). The high rate of teenage pregnancy makes Hartford a viable place to learn more about teenage motherhood and learn what other moms may be experiencing in similar locations.

Theory

This investigation departs from previous studies in three key ways. First, previous studies tend to define teenage pregnancy as pathological and immoral. This investigation explores teen pregnancy as a byproduct of particular social conditions and arrangements. As an extension of this concept, the second contribution of this work is that it examines teenage moms and their children as a socially relevant family form. This conceptual shift departs from other investigations that rely on rigid definitions of family. Third, racial and ethnic groups are not treated as homogeneous classifications. In previous studies, groups such as Blacks and Latinas are treated as if they have one unifying experience. In this analysis, it is the heterogeneity of women that is implicit and therefore explored.

The primary objective is to learn how Black and Latin adolescent mothers conceptualize and "do" mothering and whether there are differences that can be attributed to racial and ethnic background. In other words, what does motherhood mean to these teens, how do they define motherhood, what child-rearing arrangements do they prescribe? While motherhood is primarily constructed as a practice that involves, "large quantities of money, . . . professional-level skills and copious amounts of physical, moral, mental, and emotional energy on the

part of the individual mother” (Hays, 1996:4), there are many variants to this definition distinguished by race, ethnicity, and class (Hill Collins, 1994; Dill, 1988). To explore these matters, an extended feminist framework, multiracial feminism, is employed.

Multiracial feminism draws its premise from feminist theory in general and Black Feminist theory specifically (Thompson, 2002; Hill Collins, 1990; Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981). It is an attempt to correct for the critiques of both models by providing a more comprehensive framework. This framework seeks to unite the various aspects of feminisms, particularly feminisms of color, by paying specific attention to race and racism as a “primary force situating genders differently” (Baca Zinn and Dill, 1996: 321). Multiracial feminism involves (1) criticizing dichotomous oppositional thinking; (2) recognizing the simultaneity of oppression *and* struggle; (3) avoiding additive analyses for multiplicative investigations; and (4) adopting a standpoint epistemology (Brewer, 1993: 16). Subsequently, the impact of class cannot be sufficiently understood decontextualized from race anymore than race issues can be fully understood decontextualized from gender. This investigation addresses these aspects. For example, to avoid a racial dichotomy and pay attention to the heterogeneity of groups, Latin and Black women are the foci. Further, each participant was asked to identify their specific racial and/or ethnic background rather than assume similar histories. The focus also specifically de-centers the normative comparison of white, middle-class mothers to everyone else.

Methods

This research uses the in-depth interview, a qualitative research technique. As Blaikie (2000) asserts, the goal in qualitative research is to get an “insider view” of what is occurring. To interpret and explain the social phenomenon, the actors’ frame of reference needs detailed investigation (Burgess 1984). The use of qualitative methods allows for a fuller, more flexible process that is particularly sensitive to the social context, subsequently, affording a better understanding and representation of the experiences of this understudied population. Intensive interviews were conducted with 23 Black and Latin adolescent mothers. According to Lofland and Lofland (1995), in-depth interviews put the researcher in the unique position of “looking, listening and asking” all at the same time. Throughout the interview process, field notes were taken so that unclear or incomplete information could be revisited and to record any observations noticed during the interview. Young mothers were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling.

A demographic summary of the adolescents who participated is shown in Tables 3-6. The Latin mothers were on average one year older than the Black participants at the time of the interview; however they varied only slightly in average age at birth of first child: 16.1 versus 16.8 years. A more noticeable difference occurs in the number of repeat births. The Latin mothers had a total of 21 children and two pregnancies compared to 15 children for the Black teen

mothers: 2.3 average number of children compared to 1.1. There were also differences between the cultures in current employment, and educational status. The Black moms were more likely to be employed at least part time (n=3/10 Latinas and 9/13 Blacks), but similarly likely to receive state assistance (n=8/10 Latinas and 7/13 Blacks), which included, but was not limited to health insurance for their children. Further, the Latin teenage mothers were less likely to have a high school diploma or equivalent, less likely to be pursuing it and less likely to be in pursuit of higher education than the African American and West Indian teenage mothers (3/10 Latinas with high school education and 3/10 pursuing GED, 0/10 pursuing higher education compared to 7/13 Black teens with high school or equivalent diplomas, 6/10 pursuing high school diplomas and 6/13 pursuing higher education or specialized training).

Each interview was audio taped and transcribed to conduct a textual analysis. After reading and re-reading transcripts and going through the process of open, axial and selective data coding, themes began to emerge. Based on emerging patterns, categories were developed. These categories are “concepts, derived from data that stand for phenomena” (Strauss and Corbin, 2002: 114).

Results

Widespread descriptions of the family and mothering experiences are not actually shared by all mothers. As documented in the literature (Miller and Browning, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Hill Collins, 1994; Dill, 1994), the ways in which mothering gets defined and practiced has many variants. When factors such as class, race, ethnicity, age and region, to name a few, are taken into account, the meaning of family and motherhood and how the act of mothering is accomplished can be very different. The perceived significance of the teenagers’ identity as African American, West Indian or Latin was explored as a basis for investigating how racial and ethnic identity influences perceptions of mothering and mothering practices. In other words, did the teenagers perceive differences by race and ethnicity in how they conceived and achieved mothering? Overall, racial and ethnic identity was important to the individual moms; however, it was not explicitly influential in how the teens viewed motherhood. Most of the teenagers did not see significant differences between themselves and mothers of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Further, while the majority of the mothers incorporate some cultural customs in their parenting styles, these traditions were used intermittently and they were reflective of many cultures: not simply their own.

Racial and ethnic identity

To explore how the teens identified racially and ethnically, several questions were posed; the first two involved how the participants racially and ethnically identified and the importance of identity. As Table 7 presents, the majority of respondents (70 percent) described their race or ethnicity as between somewhat and very important to them; the importance of race or ethnicity did not vary

across the respondents. The following are typical quotes from respondents who described their cultural identity as being significant to them.

Lisa: *Damn important. I love being my race.*

Renae: *It means a lot to me. Jamaican is just who I am.*

Tina: *It is very important. You know, they always talking about where we came from, our roots and everything, and that's very important. It's good to know where you came from and, you know, what people had to do for you in order to get here.*

As revealed by the narratives of other moms, racial and ethnic status influenced structural opportunities and general perceptions. These moms may not have consciously realized it, but they were recognizing the effects of racism. Their life chances are influenced by a complex interaction of many factors including their racial and ethnic designation, urban residence, and economic standing. These young women were identifying or rather not identifying the importance of their own racial and ethnic background to themselves as an oppositional stance. In essence, they were asserting that their racial and ethnic status was only important as it relates to discriminatory policies and attitudes of others. For example, Stacy is motivated to prove them [White Americans] wrong by pursuing higher education and establishing a successful career for herself. Still other moms such as Jamie want to show the world that she is a good mom regardless of being young and Puerto Rican; and both Sherrie and Tara see obstacles strictly because of their Jamaican and African American heritages, and they plan to overcome these challenges. While it may be difficult to specifically name, each of these teens recognize that their life chances are at least in part influenced by their racial and ethnic background. Further, they do not intend to be passive about addressing this issue.

Racial and ethnic background: Influences on mothering

To explore the teenagers' sense of cultural awareness and its importance to their mothering practices, each participant was asked how important their race/ethnicity was in terms of how they raise their children, what cultural customs, if any, they included in their childrearing and whether they felt their parenting was different from mothers with different racial and ethnic backgrounds. The results from these three questions were remarkably consistent. Most of the respondents (61 percent) did not feel that their race or ethnicity shaped their views on motherhood. This finding, however, is inconsistent with the number of teens who stated that their racial and ethnic backgrounds were important to them; 70% affirmed that their racial and ethnic identity was somewhat to very important. Perhaps the teens' reasons for assigning cultural importance contributes to this disconnect between identity and practice.

Most of the teenagers (74 percent) believed that their views on motherhood were similar to mothers of varying racial and ethnic backgrounds. The results are shown in Tables 8 and 9. The mothers were also probed as to what cultural customs they associated with their background and if these were deliberately being passed down to their children. Overall, participants did not provide many specific examples of cultural customs. Most often, the investigator had to prompt the teens by asking about food, language or cultural festivals. Once they received examples, 18 (78 percent) of the teenagers stated that they included some cultural customs in their mothering although the importance of these traditions was ambiguous and the customs did not necessarily reflect their own background. Only nine (39 percent) of the teenagers described these customs in a way in which one might interpret them as being committed to including these in their children's lives on regular basis. These are discussed in more detail below.

For most of the teenage mothers, their race or ethnic background was not perceived as having a significant impact on how they view motherhood. When asked the question, how important is your race or ethnicity to how you raise your children, the response was usually short and to the point. Fourteen of the moms simply said no, their cultural background did not influence their views on motherhood or their ideas about childrearing. However, the follow up inquiries offered more perspective. The teens were asked whether they see themselves as different from mothers who have different racial or ethnic backgrounds than themselves. This question gave the teens a place to clarify or elaborate on their impressions. For example, eighteen-year-old Tasha explains:

It doesn't matter what you are. It should be all the same. It depends on how you grow your child. I know, I grow my child on how I grew up with manners and yes ma'am and no ma'am.

Tasha recognizes that she is incorporating mothering practices used to raise her child, but she does not attribute these practices to any particular race or ethnicity. Similarly, Allison discusses the variation within ethnic groups. Following the multiracial feminist framework, racial and ethnic groups are not assumed to be homogenous in values, beliefs or practices. Allison presents this very idea when she states:

Like I am Puerto Rican and my friend could be Puerto Rican but her family do things differently than my family. So it's like everybody does their own way.

Other participants stressed a variety of factors that they believe are more influential in determining how a person parents than race or ethnicity. These factors include life circumstances, level of support, and determination. In other words, it was the person and how she was managing her environment that most

influenced how she would mother. According to Tara, mothers have varying amounts of support from family, from the child's father and so forth. This difference contributes to how a mom is able to handle the various responsibilities of parenting. Tara talks about how:

Some Puerto Ricans have their mothers to help them out a lot ... some Black people do that too.... I know some people raise their own child who had no help at all and then there are some people that their father takes care of everything and they don't have to do nothing and so I think it all depends on the situation, not ... not their cultural background.

In addition to support, other mothers like Corrine stated that "it all depends on the person." The mom herself is the most important factor in determining how she will mother. Similarly, Aaliyah identified determination and one's response to her environment as influential in shaping motherhood experiences. Aaliyah does not think this determination or willpower is common or infrequent in any particular racial or ethnic group. Again, it all depends on the person and how that person manages life.

I would say that just because I'm African-American because maybe someone else is of a different race, probably thinks, you know, the same way I do. I mean, it all depends on the person and how they think.

I mean, some people just are like "yeah, I'm a mom, but I don't want my kids or I'm going to go give my kids away because of whatever reason" and then there's some that, you know, "this is my child and I'm going to take care of my baby no matter what." ... I would say that it just depends on the person and you know, how they think and like, what they're going through, what's going through their life at the time.

To further stress the idea of motherhood being affected by situation, Morgan, who identifies as African American, states that her mothering practices are influenced by living with and near Puerto Rican families. According to Morgan, she takes care of her house and cooks similarly to the ways the Puerto Rican families in her neighborhood do. However, she does not believe that mothers are essentially different based on their race or ethnicity. The idea of practices versus overall views on mothering is a recurring theme. In fact, when this question is examined differently, it appears that the data displayed in Tables 8 and 9 do not fully disclose what is going on. While there were 17 teenage mothers who specifically stated that they do not believe their views are different from other mothers with different racial and ethnic backgrounds (and these correspond almost precisely with those who stated that their racial or ethnic background does not influence their own views on motherhood), when probed further, it became apparent that something else was at work. It

wasn't necessarily that these teens did not recognize differences especially in terms of specific practices, but rather that they did not think these differences actually mattered. In other words, these teens felt that ultimately, motherhood was motherhood regardless of the ways in which it was manifested. Repeatedly, the teen moms were declaring that yes, I may discipline my child differently or cook different foods, but all things considered, these variations are meaningless. It is the act of mothering and how it is defined that is relevant. It seems these teenagers felt that the role of mother transcends race and ethnicity. As Rosa states, "I think we all look at motherhood the same because we all care for our children." Stacy explained it as follows:

I don't know, I think we all would probably have similar views. We'd all want the same things for our children. I don't think there should be much of a big difference.

I mean, maybe there is a difference in how you raise your child, the details, but when it comes to, you know, that everyone would probably have the same view in what they would want.

The ultimate desire for a promising, successful life for your child was seen as comparable across racial and ethnic lines. The differences were located in the "performance" of mothering. For example, several of the mothers talked about disciplinary differences. Tasha discussed respect and manners being an important part of the Jamaican culture. She felt it necessary for her child to be considerably polite and "mannerable" and not "talk back, smack their mother and all that" which she felt were more acceptable practices in the Puerto Rican community. Instituting corporal punishment to raise respectful children is considered an acceptable, even necessary, part of disciplinary practice among Jamaican families (Brice-Baker, 1996). Similarly, Sherrie who also identified as Jamaican American, emphasized that her daughter needed to have "respect for her elders ... know her place."

In reviewing the complete data, a more accurate representation of how the teens perceived racial and ethnic differences emerged. By probing beyond the initial questions of whether teens perceived that their racial or ethnic heritage influenced their own views on motherhood and others, it became evident that the participants were reticent about differences not because they deny their existence, but because the variations are not perceived as meaningful. These moms suggest that regardless of whether they are Puerto Rican, African American, or West Indian, they face common struggles of discrimination, poverty, neighborhood and personal violence, and lack of support from most of their children's fathers. Further, when analyzing the last item, deficient support from dads, their experiences cross class lines. The intensive mothering concept applies to women of varying economic backgrounds as the responsibilities of mom's are overwhelmingly more challenging than those assigned to dads regardless

of socioeconomic background. These young mothers are asserting that moms get left holding the bag regardless. Subsequently, rather than concentrate on difference, they are more interested in focusing on similarities and perhaps establishing alliances.

Cultural customs used in childrearing

As mentioned above, when asked to give examples of cultural traditions the mothers prescribe to in their parenting, most did not answer without first receiving prompts. Eighteen (78 percent) of the teenage moms provided examples of customs they use in their childrearing. However, not all 18 used these on any regular basis and not all of the customs reflected their own race or ethnic backgrounds. In other words, several of the teenage moms stated that they included traditions intermittently and that a broad, diverse set of customs beyond their own racial and ethnic backgrounds, like food, music, and cultural festivals, were incorporated suggesting a more multi-cultural approach. Tasha discussed listening to “Jamaican music ... Spanish music ... and all kinds of music,” while Kim, Tina, and Aisha discussed cooking and eating foods from their own cultural background as well as others. As Aisha plainly put it “I eat what I like.” Kim described passing on diverse customs: “I be trying to pass on some White traditions, some Black traditions, some ghetto traditions.” This diverse approach may be attributed to the multitude of ethnic festivals and family events sponsored in Hartford as well as numerous supermarkets selling international foods and the ethnically diverse population of the city itself.

Discussion and conclusions

The findings point to two recurring themes: parenting is women’s work and the commonalities among mothers outweigh the differences. In addition, their common perceptions as mothers were more meaningful than differences based on race, ethnicity, age or even class. According to these young women, mothers face the same challenges; they are simply parenting in different contexts and different currencies. In other words, different races and ethnicities may incorporate various cultural customs and have different resources afforded them based on class status, but their mothering remains comparable. The assumption is that mothers want the best for their children *and* they want to provide the best with a caring, active, supportive father. This hope exists regardless of age, race, ethnicity or class status. Allison nicely sums up this idea when she talks about mothering this way: “everybody goes through the same thing. Even if for a different reason or a different situation. Everybody goes through the same thing.”

This finding is significant in two ways. First, at initial glance, it may appear that the experience of sexism as it shapes the structure of the family institution is perceived as the foremost oppressing element. With this interpretation, one might suggest that gender trumps race and ethnicity as the most important factor shaping families. However, that is not exactly the message these women

are presenting. When discussing their own racial and ethnic identity and the ways in which this identity shapes their parenting practices, it is clear that their cultural backgrounds influence their lives in various ways. It is here suggested that when you take all of the narratives into context, a richer picture is revealed. Essentially, the women do recognize structural limitations in the form of racism, sexism, and classism. Further, they specifically are choosing to respond to the “ism” which they feel they have the most power over: sexism as it influences the family. Perhaps this can be referred to as “selective social mobility.” In other words, these teenagers may not feel empowered to combat racism or classism, but they do see a way to “select” and affect one aspect of the patriarchal society by demanding changes from their children’s fathers. The oppressive, labour-intensive role of mother is contrary to the privileged status of fathers who can choose whether to participate in the rearing of their children and how to do so. These teenagers may not feel they can combat sexism publicly on a large scale, but they can certainly do so in their own homes. The teenagers in the study are resisting the traditional definition of family that reinforces their domination by men. Ultimately, this personal fight can infiltrate and shape the larger social institutions.

With few exceptions, the teens did not specifically acknowledge many class or race issues that differentiated them as mothers. Some moms discussed different disciplinary styles and potential support from family members based on race and ethnicity. One teen mom, Kim, did not understand why pregnant White teenagers tended to abort their children because as she put it “their parents will pay for abortions every year. If anything they have more than we have. They have rich parents and you just want to throw your baby in the garbage.” While these examples are few, it does not negate the teenagers’ overall understanding of racial and class elements. For example, the women in this study want a nice house with a backyard; they want quality education for their children. However, without explicitly stating it, they recognize that their opportunity structure is limiting so they have adapted their aspirations accordingly. They desire a nice house in a *safer* part of Hartford rather than a *safe* neighborhood in a suburban or rural area.

While the ideological construction of teenage pregnancy is racialized by experts and the media which concentrate on women of color as young (and therefore deviant) mothers, the mothering experiences of these women is not uncommon. The young, African American, West Indian and Latin women appreciated the shared or collective experiences of motherhood with other women as shaped by a patriarchal system. Mothers, particularly but not limited to single mothers, were viewed as having similar struggles related to childrearing in spite of differing cultural backgrounds, age, and socioeconomic class. Subsequently, the most meaningful recommendation involves shifting the center. By approaching teenage pregnancy and young motherhood (1) from the perspectives of young mothers and (2) outside a framework of social pathology, more effective programs can be developed and structural inequi-

ties addressed. By understanding parenting as a social construction within patriarchal constraints, the model can be deconstructed and rebuilt in a manner beneficial to both mothers and fathers. The mothers from this study and beyond are calling for more equitable responsibilities as related to parenting. For this to occur, however, we need to closely examine the family institution and its location within a capitalist system. The current economy has made it increasingly difficult for parents to have one person at home while the other is in the workforce. More two-parent families require that both parents work. This change translates into even less time for the labour-intensive mothering defined as ideal. For single mothers who are employed, the time constraints are even more arduous. Exploring ways to redefine the roles of parents and providing services to support them in these positions is pertinent.

As with all research, there are limitations and it is important to acknowledge and address these potential biases. For this research, limitations emerge in (1) the population under investigation; (2) recruiting methods; and (3) general restrictions to qualitative research. First, the decision to focus on teenage mothers is at the exclusion of fathers. Their stories are certainly important and can expand the understanding of parenting in general. Recruitment represents the second limitation. The interviewees were identified initially through a parenting support program and then by snowballing. These techniques may indicate that the individuals who agreed to participate are potentially different from other adolescent mothers. The potential differences cannot be known unless a number of adolescent mothers are recruited in different ways. Finally, while qualitative data is valuable in extracting new concepts and delving into the experiences of groups, because of the type of data collection, the total number of participants is relatively small and the data is not generalizable to whole populations.

Future research can overcome these limitations in several ways. Expanding the recruitment efforts to include more ways of tapping into mothers, increasing the number of participants, adding a longitudinal element and expanding the study to include fathers would all be valuable enhancements to the literature. Learning more about how young fathers conceptualize fathering and their relationship to the mother would provide useful insight into this topic.

References

- Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI). 2002. *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Trends and Lessons Learned*. New York: Allan Guttmacher Institute.
- Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI). 2004. *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information*. New York: Allan Guttmacher Institute.
- Baca Zinn, M. and B. T. Dill. 1996. "Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism." *Feminist Studies* 222: 321-331.

- Berne, L. and B. Huberman. 1999. *European Approaches to Adolescent Sexual Behavior and Responsibility*. Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth.
- Blaikie, N. 2000. *Designing Social Research*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Brewer, R.M. 1993. "Theorizing Race, Class and Gender: The New Scholarship of Black Feminist Intellectuals and Black Women's Labour." *Theorizing Black Feminisms: The Visionary Pragmatism of Black Women*. Eds. Stanlie M. James and Abena P. A. Busia. New York: Routledge. 13-30.
- Brice-Baker, J.B. 1996. "Jamaican Families." *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*. 2nd ed. Eds. M. McGoldrick, J. K. Pearce, and J. Giordano. New York: Guilford Press. 85-96.
- Burgess, R.G. 1984. *In the Field: An Introduction to Field Research*. London, Allen and Unwin.
- Connecticut Department of Public Health: Family Health Division 2001. *Connecticut Registration Report*, Table 4.
- Dill, B. T. 1988. "Our Mothers' Grief: Racial Ethnic Women and the Maintenance of Families." *Journal of Family History* 13: 415-431.
- Dill, B.T. 1994. "Fictive Kin, Paper Sons and Compadrazgo: Women of Color and the Struggle for Family Survival." *Women of Color in U.S. Society*. Eds. M.B. Zinn and B.T. Dill. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 149-170.
- Gruendel, J. M. 2001. "Understanding Connecticut's WIA-Eligible Youth Population: Report #1-Teen Parents and School Dropouts." *Report to the CETC Youth Committee*. Connecticut.
- Hartford Department of Public Health, Vital Records Office. *Preliminary Records*. 2001.
- Hays, S. 1996. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hill Collins, P. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Hill Collins, P. 1994. "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood." *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*. Eds. E. N. Glenn, G. Chang, and L. R. Forcey. New York: Routledge. 45-65.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. and E. Avila. 1997. "I'm Here, but I'm There: The Meaning of Latina Transitional Motherhood." *Gender and Society* 115: 548-570.
- Kaufmann, R. B., Spitz, A. M., Strauss, L. T., Morris, L., Santelli, J. S., Koonin, L. M. and J. S. Marks. 1998. "The Study, the Context and the Findings in Brief." *Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy*. Ed. R. A. Maynard. Washington D.C., The Urban Institute. 1-22.
- Lofland, J. and L. H. Lofland. 1995. *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. University of California, Davis: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Miller, R. R. and S. L. Browning. 2000. "How Constructions of Ethnicity

and Gender Contribute to Shaping Non-traditional Family Patterns: Some Introductory Comments.” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* Vol. 313: 301-311.

Moraga, C. and G. Anzaldua, eds. 1981. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press.

Strauss, A. and J. Corbin. 2002. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Thompson, B. 2002. “Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism.” *Feminist Studies* 282: 337-360.

Trussell, James. 1988. “Teen Pregnancy in the United States.” *Family Planning Perspectives* 20 (6): 262-272.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Teen Pregnancy County Birth Statistics, 2000

| State & County | Total Number of Births in County | Total Number of Births to Teens in County | Percent of Total Births to Teens in County |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Connecticut-Hartford | 11,262 | 1,111 | 9.9% |

Table 2: Teen Birth Rate for Hartford County, 1999-2001

| Hartford County Town | Number of Girls Ages 15-17 | Number of Births | Rate per 1,000 |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Avon | 939 | - | - |
| Berlin | 1,149 | - | - |
| Bloomfield | 1,020 | 17 | 16.7 |
| Bristol | 3,354 | 62 | 18.5 |
| Burlington | 534 | - | - |
| Canton | 525 | - | - |
| East Granby | 300 | - | - |

| | | | |
|---------------|-------|-----|------|
| East Hartford | 2,784 | 72 | 25.9 |
| East Windsor | 525 | - | - |
| Enfield | 2,544 | 19 | 7.5 |
| Farmington | 1,410 | - | - |
| Glastonbury | 1,869 | - | - |
| Granby | 651 | - | - |
| Hartford | 8,472 | 523 | 61.7 |
| Hartland | 192 | - | - |

Table 3: Age and Number of Children for Latina Adolescent Mothers

| Interviewee | Age at time of Interview | Age at birth of first child | Total number of children | Race or Ethnicity |
|-------------|--|---|---|-------------------|
| Maria | 22 | 15 | 3 | Puerto Rican |
| Nora | 20 | 18 | 2 and pregnant | Puerto Rican |
| Corrine | 22 | 15 | 3 | Puerto Rican |
| Jamie | 19 | 15 | 1 | Puerto Rican |
| Carla | 21 | 17 | 1 and pregnant | Puerto Rican |
| Lisa | 17 | 16 | 2 twins) | Puerto Rican |
| Rosa | 21 | 17 | 2 | Puerto Rican |
| Allison | 23 | 17 | 2 | Puerto Rican |
| Mary | 22 | 15 | 3 | Puerto Rican |
| Aida | 19 | 16 | 2 | Puerto Rican |
| | Average age at time of interview =20.6 | Average age at birth of first child= 16.1 | Average number of children = 2.3 not including pregnancies) | |

| Table 4: Age and Number of Children for Black Adolescent Mothers | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Interviewee | Age at time of interview | Age at birth of first child | Total number of children | Race or Ethnicity |
| Kim | 17 (E) | 16 | 1 | African American |
| Aaliyah | 22 | 16 | 2 | African American |
| Tina | 20 | 16 | 1 | African American |
| Tara | 17 | 15 | 1 | African American |
| Morgan | 20 | 17 | 1 | African American |
| Stacy | 22 | 19 | 1 | African American |
| Aisha | 23 | 17 | 1 | African American |
| Anne | 21 | 18 | 1 | Jamaican Am. |
| Jodi | 22 | 18 | 2 | Haitian American |
| Maya | 19 | 18 | 1 | Jamaican Am. |
| Tasha | 18 | 17 | 1 | Jamaican Am. |
| Sherrie | 17 | 16 | 1 | Jamaican Am. |
| Renae | 17 (E) | 16 | 1 | Jamaican Am. |
| | Average at time of interview = 19.5 | Average age at birth of first child = 16.8 | Average number of children = 1.1 | |
| *The letter "E" in parenthesis indicates that the teenager was an emancipated adult. | | | | |

Table 5: Basic Demographics for Latina Adolescent Mothers

| Interviewee | Working hours per week | Receives State Assistance | High School Education and beyond | Current relationship with child's dad |
|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Maria | Yes 15-20 hrs | No | No, last grade completed = 9 | Yes, with father of 3 rd child |
| Nora | No | Yes | Yes, GED | No |
| Corrine | No | Yes | No last grade completed = 11 | Yes, with father of 3 rd child |
| Jamie | Yes 15-20 hrs | No | No, currently in Adult Ed. | No |
| Carla | No | Yes | No, last grade completed = 9 | No |
| Lisa | No | Yes | No, last grade completed = 9 | No |
| Rosa | No | Yes | Yes, GED | No |
| Allison | No | Yes | No, currently in Adult Ed. | No |
| Mary | Yes 10-15 hrs | Yes | Yes, GED, currently in Comm. College | Yes, with father of 3 rd child |
| Aida | No | Yes | No, currently in Adult Ed. | No |
| | 3/10 work at least part time | 8/10 receive state assistance | 3/10 have HS ed. 3/10 are in GED program | 0/10 with father of first child 3/10 with father of 3 rd child |

| Table 6: Basic Demographics for Black Adolescent Mothers | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Interviewee | Working hours per week | Receives State Assistance | High School Education and beyond | Current relationship with child's dad |
| Kim | Yes, 15-40 hrs | Yes | No, currently in 12 th grade | Yes |
| Aaliyah | Yes, 30 hrs | No | Yes, GED | Yes |
| Tina | Yes, 35-40 hrs | Yes | Yes, currently in Comm. College | No |
| Tara | Yes, 10-15 hrs | Yes | No, currently in 12 th grade | No |
| Morgan | No | Yes | Yes, GED, currently in Comm. College | No |
| Stacy | Yes, 30-35 hrs | No | Yes, currently in 4 year college | No |
| Aisha | No | Yes | Yes, currently in medical training | No |
| Anne | Yes, 32-40 hrs | Yes | Yes, currently in Comm. College | No |
| Jodi | Yes, 20 hrs | No | Yes, currently in Comm. College | No |
| Maya | No | No | No, currently in 12 th grade | Yes |
| Tasha | Yes, 20-30 hrs | No | No, currently in 12 th grade | Yes |
| Sherrie | No | Yes | No, currently in 12 th grade | No |
| Renae | Yes, 40 hrs | No | No, currently in 12 th grade | Yes |
| | 9/13 work at least part-time | 7/13 receive state assistance | 7/13 have HS education; 6/13 are in HS | 5/13 with father of child |

| Table 7: Importance of Racial/Ethnic Identity | | | |
|---|-----------|--------------------|---------------|
| Racial/ Ethnic Identity | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important |
| Puerto Rican | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| African American | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| West Indian | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| | 9 (39%) | 7 (31%) | 7 (30%) |

| Table 8: Do You Think Your Racial/Ethnic Heritage Influences Your Views on Motherhood? | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Racial/ Ethnic Identity | Yes or somewhat influence | No influence | I don't know |
| Puerto Rican | 3 | 6 | 1 |
| African American | 1 | 6 | 0 |
| West Indian | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| | 7 (30%) | 14 (61%) | 2 (9%) |

| Table 9: Do You Think Your Views on Motherhood are Similar to Those of Other Racial or Ethnic Groups? | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Racial/ Ethnic Identity | Yes or somewhat similar | Not similar | I don't know |
| Puerto Rican | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| African American | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| West Indian | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| | 17 (74%) | 4 (17%) | 2 (9%) |